



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEW FWS VESSEL TO HUNT SHRIMP OFF ALASKA ON SHAKEDOWN CRUISE

The motor vessel US FWS John N. Cobb, recently built for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and commissioned in Seattle in mid-February, will sail for Ketchikan, Alaska, March 19 on a shakedown cruise, the Department of the Interior announced today. On the "break-in" cruise, the vessel will do exploratory fishing for large shrimp in the hope of establishing an off-season fishery in Alaskan waters.

If quantities of large shrimp can be found in the deep water channels near Ketchikan, an additional source of income will be opened to small-boat operators in Southeastern Alaska after the salmon season closes. As the channels are rocky, and trawls cannot be used successfully, the Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to devise and test other methods of fishing for the shrimp.

The John N. Cobb will return to Seattle before June 1 for a check-up. The vessel will sail in early June to the seamount area approximately 500 miles due west of the Columbia River and wait there for the first albacore tuna of the season to arrive. Then it will proceed to Dellwood Hills — an undersea plateau — and to other seamounts off Southeastern Alaska to trace the tuna's migration and determine patterns of abundance. This exploratory work may help to establish an important tuna fishery for Alaska.

A 93-foot, all-wood vessel, the John N. Cobb is equipped with the latest navigational equipment — including radar, loran, two depth-finding devices, and electri-mechanical steering. An experimental-sized refrigerated hold, bait tanks, brine wells, and all the fishing equipment for seining, longline fishing, surface and deep trolling, and trawling are part of the gear, as well as some experimental rigs of unorthodox design.

While searching for tuna, the vessel will broadcast information to the fishing fleets, and render incidental services such as giving bearings and weather reports. These services will follow the pattern set by the US FWS Oregon while exploring for tuna last fall.

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